

TESTIMONY TO APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

RE: February 18 DMHAS Testimony –Regional Action Councils

My name is Marcia McGinley and I am the School Social Worker at Regional School District #11, Parish Hill/Middle High School in Chaplin. I have worked with Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse (NECASA), the Regional Action Council in Northeast Connecticut for many years and would like to highlight how this organization has helped Parish Hill Middle/High School.

It is first and foremost import to highlight that NECASA is the ONLY support that our school receives to provide drug/alcohol prevention initiatives within the school. This is detrimental to the youth of our communities; Chaplin, Hampton and Scotland. The tri-towns do not have a Youth Service Bureau or community agencies that provide support to children and families; therefore, the only prevention, education and positive engagement activities that students receive is through the school.

The District Eleven Substance Abuse Prevention Council has been in existence for at least 16 years. This council exists due to the funding provided by NECASA. Without the funding and support that NECASA provides we would not be able to provide the following prevention, education and engagement activities to our students.

***Education and prevention:** The Second Step Curriculum is taught to all 7th and 8th grades students through the school year. The curriculum is an evidence based curriculum that teaches drug/alcohol prevention, social skills, anger management, etc. Without funding through NECASA this curriculum would not be able to be provided to the 7th and 8th graders at Parish Hill.

***Positive Youth Engagement:** Extra Curricular activities are funded through NECASA. This is an area that is very important in order to provide students with positive role models, engagement and new learning experiences. The school budget does not allow for extra- curricular activity funding.

***Outreach/Education:** NECASA has also been very active at our school through drug/alcohol trainings to our students, attending our annual Health Fairs and acting as community experts to students working on their Senior Capstone Project, a graduation requirement. In addition, NECASA has provided numerous trainings to area professionals.

In a time with increased issues regarding drug use/abuse, especially in the northeast corner of Connecticut, funding for NECASA is detrimental in fighting the disease of drug addiction.

Northeastern Connecticut benefits from having NECASA here to help us and to leverage funding for needed prevention services. I ask that the Appropriations Committee keep the Regional Action Councils as vibrant and appropriately funded in the FY 16-17 budget.

